

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

LOCAL No. 876 AFL-CIO

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Keith Sarnis, Business Manager



July 9, 2009

Dear House of Representatives and to whom it may concern:

As a representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 876, I am concerned about Michigan's Frost Law and its negative impact on utility subcontractors. Michigan's Frost Law takes effect during the months of March, April and May each year. During these months, weight limits on certain county roads are generally reduced by 35%. This weight limit reduction presents special problems for our union contractors. Many of our utility repair and maintenance vehicles are not able to meet this reduced weight limit; however, the need for reliable and efficient utility service does not end during those months.

Michigan's Frost Law only partially accommodates itself to the important needs of its citizens and businesses for reliable and efficient utility service. Michigan's utilities and their subcontractors may use county roads under Michigan's unreduced weight limits to respond to emergencies. However during these three months, utilities, **but not their subcontractors**, may obtain permits for their vehicles to use county roads under unreduced weight limits for non-emergency utility work such as trenching for underground electric and gas service and tree trimming in preparation for spring storms. Subcontractors do much of this work. Denying utility subcontractors the same ability to obtain permits to use county roads degrades utility industry efforts to operate reliably and efficiently.

We are a union that provides line work, substation work, pole replacement, tree trimming, underground work to install replace and/or upgrade pipelines to the utility industry. We perform these services for the whole state of Michigan except the Detroit area. Additionally we have performed subcontract services for utilities throughout Michigan including the Upper Peninsula. We are headquartered in Comstock Park Michigan, and provide employment to over 1,300 members of Michigan.

International
Brotherhood of
Electrical
Workers, AFL-CIO

Officers
Frank Maslowski, Pres.
Matthew Silson, V. Pres.
Robert Edmonds, Sec.
David Van Pelt, Treas.

We believe Michigan's current law, which allows utilities permitted use of county roads during March, April and May, is a fair compromise between the interests of maintaining roads and providing reliable and efficient utility service. We are doing the same work as utilities, and that work should be accorded the same privileges and responsibilities whether performed by a utility or its subcontractor.

I ask for your support of HB 4999 to address this issue. HB 4999 would simply allow utility subcontractors to use county roads during the months of March, April and May under the same rules that apply to the utilities that employ them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Sarns", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Keith Sarns
Business Manager
IBEW Local 876